

REMARKS

Claims 1-17 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claim 17 is added. No new matter is added.

The courtesies extended to Applicant's representative by Examiner Addison and Primary Examiner Tamai at the interview held May 28, are appreciated. The reasons presented at the interview as warranting favorable action are incorporated into the remarks below and constitute Applicant's record of the interview.

Regarding the rejection of claims 1-3, 7, 10 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e), Applicant further asserts that the intermediate member of 4a, as shown in Fig. 3, has the shape after being depressed by an axial force generated by fastening a bolt 6. Furthermore, Fig. 3 shows the state of the intermediate member 4a due to the pressure from the flange 6a exerted onto the intermediate member by an axial force applied to the bolt 6 as the bolt is tightened.

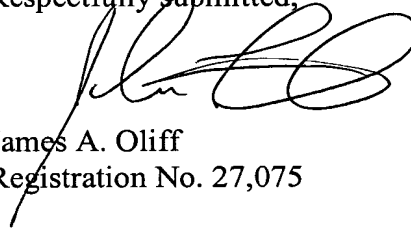
Additionally, even were Fig. 3 interpreted to be insufficient to support the subject matter of the claims amended in the May 12, 2003 Amendment, the amended language is adequately supported in the specification, at least in page 2, lines 17-19 and page 5, lines 19-21. For example, "a flange or a washer of the bolt readily cuts into the intermediate member by an axial force generated when fastening the bolt" and "the flange 6a cuts into the intermediate member 4a by the axial force so that the intermediate member 4a is deformed at a contact portion with the flange 6a." Thus, Applicant asserts that the subject matter recited in the amended claims is adequately supported in the application.

Applicant also asserts that new claim 17 is allowable for at least the reasons discussed above. Support for the subject matter recited in claim 17 may be found throughout the specification and at least that page 5, lines 19-24.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-17 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



James A. Oliff
Registration No. 27,075

John W. Fitzpatrick
Registration No. 41,018

JAO:JWF/ldg

Date: August 18, 2003

OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC
P.O. Box 19928
Alexandria, Virginia 22320
Telephone: (703) 836-6400

**DEPOSIT ACCOUNT USE
AUTHORIZATION**

Please grant any extension
necessary for entry;
Charge any fee due to our
Deposit Account No. 15-0461